



# CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Opening Minds ~ Transforming Lives*

Kevin D. Case  
Superintendent of Schools

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Board of Education Chair

## **TESTIMONY OF THE CANTON BOARD OF EDUCATION RE THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION RE STATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**JULIE C. AUZERÉ**  
**CHAIR, CANTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**2/17/17**

The Canton Board of Education which represents the Canton Public Schools has the following comments regarding the Governor's recommendation for State financial support for public education in school years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

- The Canton Board of Education acknowledges the need for a new state funding formula that provides an equal opportunity education for all children in the state of Connecticut. The Canton Board of Education would request that this formula be developed using a joint task force that represents constituents from Boards of Education, Superintendents, Selectmen and/or Town Mayors, legislators as well as representatives of the Executive branch of government. Time should be taken to develop a well-thought out formula that is transparent to all and can be effective for many years.
- The Canton Board of Education supports the separation of the special education funding from the Education Cost-Sharing Grant (ECS). However, it is not supportive of the sliding scale ranging from 0% to 55% depending on the wealth of the community. Special Education services are mandated by the state and often very expensive to towns the size of Canton. Reducing the possibility of special education funding to \$0 would be detrimental to the local school budget. The current formula also does not allow for the impact of a high needs student moving into district during a school year, which often happens in the town of Canton, a district known for its superior special education services.
- It is the understanding of the Canton Board of Education that the ECS funding formula considers a community's ability to pay. The Town of Canton with a median household income of \$89,000 is being asked to reduce its education budget by approximately 8.26%, which would reduce the cost per pupil to \$14,407, which would be below the state average. Surrounding Farmington Valley towns with a median household income of \$100,000 or greater are being asked to reduce their budgets by approximately 2.4%-5.5% and will maintain cost per pupil of greater than \$15,000. On the surface, the formula appears to ask a greater sacrifice of smaller middle income towns in the state.

### ***Our Mission***

*Our mission is to prepare independent, productive, respectful and responsible citizens who contribute to an ever changing world. We pursue continuous improvement while honoring our strong educational legacy and traditions. We unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences that promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.*

- The Canton Board of Education is very concerned about the combined effect of the proposed ECS funding reduction and the recommendation that local communities fund 1/3 of the State's obligation of the Teacher Retirement System. The Town of Canton has a significant fixed income population which would preclude the town from increasing property taxes to significantly offset the reduction in funding by the state. The overall effect for the Canton Public Schools would be an 8.26% reduction of its education budget. This \$2.1 million budget reduction would significantly affect the curriculum and programming of the Canton Public Schools, which could include:
  - Review of funding for Full-Day Kindergarten
  - Reduction in technology spending
  - Review of all extra-curricular and athletic activities
  - Reduction in support services provided to students and families
  - Reduction in certified staff which would increase class size and reduce the quality of education received by students

These changes would essentially move the Canton Public Schools backwards and prohibit the ability to move toward mastery-based learning, which current educational research supports as the future for education.

The Canton Board of Education recognizes the challenging financial situation of the State. However, we feel that the future success of the State requires a robust educational system for all and request that you keep education funding a high priority of the State.

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